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Message Text

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43
ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 ERDA-07 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-02 DODE-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-15 SAM-01

OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-10 AF-08 IO-13

EA-09 /144 W
---------- 018240
R 261215Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7339
INFO USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 10881

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, IN VN
SUBJECT: INDIA OFFERS TO DEVELOP VIETNAM OFFSHORE OILFIELDS

1. ACCORDING TO A JULY 26 TIMES OF INDIA PRESS REPORT,
THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM IS STUDYING A PROPOSAL BY INDIA
TO DEVELOP THE OFFSHORE OIL FIELDS OF VIETNAM. BASED ON
THE ARTICLE, THE GOI HAS OFFERED THE SERVICES OF ITS OIL AND
NATURAL GAS COMMISSION (ONGC) TO STEP IN AND FILL A VACCUM
IN OFFSHORE EXPLORATION THAT HAS EXISTED SINCE THE MULTI-
NATIONAL OIL COMPANIES PULLED OUT WITH THE COMMUNIST TAKEOVER.

2. THE ARTICLE ALSO MENTIONED ONGC'S WILLINGNESS TO
PROVIDE SIMILR SUPPORT TO THE NEWLY FORMED GOVERNMENT
OF ANGOLA WITH EGARD TO COPERATING ITS RICH CABINDA OILFIELDS.
HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT OFFICIAL TALKS ON
THIS MATTER HAD TAKEN PLACE.

3.COMMENT: SO FAR WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO VERIFY THE
ABOVE PRESS REPORT WITH THE GOI'S MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM.
IN THE ABSENCE OF OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION AND UNTIL
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ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE PROPOSED VENTURE ARE AVAILABLE,

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IT IS DIFFICULT TO COMMENT ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF INDIA'S
REPORTED OFFER. HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF ONGC'S

EXISTING INVOLVEMENT IN THREE OVERSEAS VENTURES (IRAN,
IRAQ AND TANZANIA), THE SHORTAGE OF INDIAN TECHNICIANS, PLUS
ITS COMMITMENT TO DEVELOP BOMBAY HIGH, IT SEEMS VERY UNLIKELY
THAT INDIA COULD MANAGE AN UNDERTAKING IN VIETNAM WITHOUT
DIRECT SUPPORT OF FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES WHICH POSSESS THE
EQUIPMENT, KNOWHOW AND THE ESSENTIAL GEOPHYSICAL DATA.
EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE AND REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS.
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